



Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission

Tuesday, July 23, 2013

5:00 PM

Air Pollution Control District Boardroom

850 Barret Avenue

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome and Announcements – Henry Heuser, Jr. and Katy Schneider, LMTAC Co-chairs

The following Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission (hereinafter, “Commission” or “LMTAC”) members were present: Henry Heuser, Jr. (Co-chair), Katy Schneider (Co-chair), Allen Steinbock (Secretary-Treasurer), Paul Cappiello, Shane Corbin, Cheri Bryant Hamilton, and Maria Koetter, as well as Ex-officio members Michelle King, Sherie Long, and Mark White. Mary Ellen Wiederwohl, Chief of Strategic Initiatives, was also present, representing the Mayor’s office.

II. Approval of Minutes – Henry Heuser, Jr.

Henry asked for and received unanimous approval of the minutes from last meeting.

III. Tree Facts Presentation – Paul Cappiello

Henry asked Commissioner and Projects & Maintenance Committee Co-chair Paul Cappiello to present a tree fact. Paul asked Henry to sip water out of a straw. Henry did so. Paul then asked Henry how a tree could pull water up a 100 foot tree. Henry did not know. Paul explained that if one tries to pull water upward through an open column for more than 30 feet, the vapor pressure is lowered by the suction so that the water begins to boil. But trees have a special system of xylem pores, allowing the water to inch up incrementally. Once the water gets into the top of the tree, there are guard cells on the leaves that allow carbon dioxide and oxygen in and out. Paul said that there can be 300 atmospheres of difference between the bottom of a tree and at the top outside the stomates. Paul passed out an illustration of the process by which trees pull water up to the top [Attachment A].

IV. Old Business

a. Update from Office of Sustainability – Maria Koetter, Director of Sustainability

Henry asked Maria Koetter, Louisville Metro Sustainability Director and Commissioner on behalf of the Louisville Metro Department of Economic Growth and Innovation, to update the Commission on old business. Maria said that the Urban Forester position had been posted as of last week and to

look out for qualified applicants. Maria then said she still needed to work through details on the Tree Canopy Assessment RFP to bring into line with purchasing guidelines. Maria said she was also working on a Sustainability Coordinator position, which would be posted in the next week. Finally, Maria said that she had been working on integrating with Brightside.

b. Update from Brightside – Gina O’Brien, Director

Brightside Executive Director Gina Iorio O’Brien said she had been working with her board of directors on to create a bank account for the separate 501(c)(3), the “Brightside Foundation.” This would be where the fund accepting donations on behalf of the Commission would be located. The Brightside Foundation is already in existence, but has been inactive and is not currently in good standing with the Secretary of State due to documents that needed to be filed. That filing was underway and should be resolved in a few weeks. The Foundation also has its own separate Board and Brightside would ask someone from the Commission to be on it.

Gina said Brightside would be able to accept donations on behalf of the Commission but that ultimately Brightside would want to keep the Commission’s funding separate from Brightside within that account. She said, for example, that checks to the Commission could be made out to the “Tree Foundation of Brightside” or some other name as a way of marking the funds for Commission use rather than general Brightside use.

Henry asked Mary Ellen Wiederwohl if she would like to add anything to the Brightside update. Mary Ellen said Brightside had a new “clean and green” mandate. She explained that the mayor was responsible for appointing Brightside’s Board of Directors. She said that there were mechanics to go through in order to get the organization up and running, but that it was exciting to see it happening.

Commissioner Allen Steinbock asked Gina what attorneys would be used for the process of expanding Brightside. Gina said it would be a County Attorney.

c. Report on visit with Keep Indianapolis Beautiful – Katy Schneider

Katy briefed the Commission about her visit to Indianapolis with Commissioners Allen and Monica, Virginia Lee of Atlas Brown, and Gina and Louis Straub, Brightside Board Chair. She said that Indianapolis’s counterpart to Brightside, Keep Indianapolis Beautiful (KIB), plants about 6,000 trees per year and has a budget of about 3.4 million dollars. Katy also spoke about their “Neighborwoods” program, which focused on getting local residents engaged and to take ownership of the trees being planted.

Katy outlined KIB’s history, which began twenty years ago with \$500,000 from the City of Indianapolis. Now, she said, KIB gets around \$200,000, which accounts for only 15 percent of their budget. They have a lot of private donors, including some large funders such as Eli Lilly and Company.

Katy said that, like Brightside, KIB’s mission was “clean and green.” Katy read part of KIB’s mission statement. She said cleaning the streets was part of KIB’s mission, but not their passion. What they really wanted to do, she said, was create lasting impacts on people’s lives—trees, the environment, and other long-term community projects.

Katy asked Allen if he wanted to add anything. Allen said KIB had a large building which had been renovated using a number of energy efficiency and sustainable strategies, as well as equipment necessary to plant trees (shovels, wheel barrows, etc.). Katy said the building was a totally green structure.

Katy asked Gina if she would like to add anything. Gina said it was incredible—the building was a great showpiece for donors, and she admired their large amount of private donations. Gina was going to meet with someone who helped KIB shift its mission and grow in order to see how to make Brightside move in a similar direction. Gina said that she would update the Commission on that meeting and its outcomes.

Katy said KIB was just one example, but that most cities with successful tree programs have a related non-profit. Katy said some of KIB's staff have become certified arborists while working for KIB. Allen estimated that they had 12 full-time staff members. Henry asked if they all seemed to understand what the mission was and whether that was why they were successful. Katy said yes.

d. Glenview Garden Club grant – Henry Heuser, Jr.

Henry said Katy made a presentation to the Glenview Garden Club (GGC) on March 19, 2013. The Commission has since made a grant application in partnership with the Louisville Downtown Management District (LDMD) for \$38,000 from GGC to water the 166 trees that are to be planted this fall downtown with Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) funding. This is phase two of a planting project that has already seen 166 trees planted in phase one by LDMD with MSD funding.

If awarded this grant, Henry said that they plan to have the GGC name on the Gator Bags to provide recognition. Katy said Chattanooga had done something similar.

Katy said she thought she might also ask GGC to consider allocating funding for the canopy assessment.

Henry also discussed the Arbor Day Foundation's Partners in Community Forestry conference, which Henry and Ex-officio Commissioner Mesude Duyar, Metro Parks, went to last year. Henry said there was a state scholarship for Commissioners, and possibly for the Urban Forester. It will be November 6-7, 2013 in Pittsburgh.

V. New business – Katy Schneider

a. Site selection criteria for trees to be planted with Brightside's tree budget

Katy said Brightside had asked the Commission for help in finding the sites for the \$250,000-\$300,000 worth of trees for which Brightside will be overseeing the planting. Katy said there should be criteria to help prioritize the plantings. She said she would like to have a mini-retreat to discuss the criteria and possible sites. Katy asked Projects & Maintenance Committee Co-chair Mike Hayman if he had anything to add.

Mike said they still hadn't figured everything out. But he said there was already a lot of interest in certain neighborhoods and that there should be a neighborhood component, but that the neighborhoods should follow set criteria. He said if they follow the criteria, they could get more trees the following year. If they didn't succeed, the Commission could mentor the neighborhoods.

Mike gave Portland as an example of a neighborhood with a lot of potential planting sites, but where it was difficult to plant. He said Louisville Grows! was looking at a planting project in Portland and they could be the organization to do the work on the ground in the neighborhood with the residents.

Mike also said that local Metro Council members should be brought into the conversation and that they could possibly match what Brightside does in the district.

b. Discussion of roles of the Commission and related entities (*i.e.*, Brightside, Metro Parks, Public Works, non-profit community, etc.)

Katy said the Commission, Metro Government, and Brightside needed to figure out who would be doing what, especially given the new Brightside mission and the new Urban Forester position.

Katy also said non-profits were springing up, but that she thought they needed to slow down and focus on the neighborhoods they know. Katy mentioned Louisville Grows! and said they were asking for MSD money. She didn't want to dampen their enthusiasm, but she wanted to work with them and help them build the capacity to take on larger projects and funding sources. Maria said she and Gina would soon be meeting with the executive director of Louisville Grows!.

Katy called on Cassandra Cullen, a member of the audience, who had her hand raised. Ms. Cullen asked if MSD would be on the list of organizations the Commission would be coordinating roles with. She said MSD was putting trees along Story Avenue, leaving a very narrow sidewalk. She said it was a problem for pedestrians. She said she loved trees, but that people needed to be able to walk on the sidewalks. Henry said he'd talked to Greg Heitzman a few weeks ago to make sure there were criteria in place before MSD dished out consent decree money.

Mary Ellen added some thoughts about the collective impact model, which is a model for using diverse resources across organizations to achieve a common goal. She cited the 55k Degrees initiative as an example. Everybody who was working toward 55,000 degrees was part of the initiative and together great strides have been made that may not have been possible for any single organization acting alone. Mary Ellen said Brightside's board was being remade with the Collective Impact Model in mind to include every stakeholder in the effort. She said planting 10,000 trees was paramount and noted that it wasn't easy to get everything in one place, but that they were working on it. She said trees were the hot topic to be working on. And she mentioned a project in West Louisville that Gina was working on with Brown-Forman. Mary Ellen said Mike's work on establishing criteria and working with neighborhoods might guide that future work. Mary Ellen said areas with no tree canopy would be a priority; another area of concern would be neighborhoods where the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) had hit.

Mike Heitz, director of Metro Parks, spoke up from the audience and said EAB was traveling up Floyd's Fork. He said he wanted to get out ahead of EAB and plant trees before there's a devastating impact. Katy said the problem was that we don't know where the ash trees are. The Commission had wanted to hire interns to map the ash trees but wasn't able to get the initiative funded.

Mary Ellen underscored that while the intent was appreciated, that at this point it was more important to target the areas of most need where we can make the biggest impact rather than worry about spreading the tree budget around different Metro Council districts.

Cheri Bryant-Hamilton said they were working with Metro Parks and Louisville Grows! to reconstitute the Shawnee Nursery.

c. Sierra Club speakers bureau

Katy said the Sierra Club had formed a local Tree Committee, chaired by Betsy Bennett (bruddben59@gmail.com) that will go to any public hearings of the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Adjustment, etc., to be sure that decision makers are informed about the impacts of removing, preserving, or planting trees. She said if anyone would like to participate, Betsy would be glad to hear from them. Attendance would also be very helpful. The first meeting would be on August 1, 2013.

VI. Committee reports

a. Projects & Maintenance Committee

Henry asked Mike Hayman to give the committee report, but Mike said he essentially already had. Henry said he and Mike were going to scout downtown planting sites the following day. Henry then planned to meet with adjacent business owners and ask them how the Commission can help them get trees.

Katy said Mike had also worked with Metro United Way. Mike said they had limited soil but they could plant small and medium-sized trees there. Mike said those trees were in parking lots, not rights of way. He said there were projects that could be similar to what was done at the African-American Heritage Center. Mike said the *Courier-Journal* had an interesting parking lot with 30-year-old oaks and linden trees in 4-foot wide cuts, giving them a shaded parking lot for 30 years.

Mary Ellen said 62% of the SoBro neighborhood (South of Broadway) was comprised of surface parking lots. She said this area would be the focus of the Portland State University Urban Sustainability Accelerator project being coordinated through the Office of Sustainability. She also said that vacant lots with demolished homes could be sites for pocket forests.

VII. Audience Input and Other Discussion

Henry asked Mike Heitz if he wanted to say anything. Mike said he already had said what he wanted to about EAB. Henry expressed concern about the viability of trees recently planted on Cherokee Parkway and whether Metro Parks had its own nursery. Mike said they did but it wasn't big enough to cover all of their planting needs.

Henry asked if anyone else in the audience wanted to speak. Ray Brundige asked if the Commission was looking to more southern nurseries, since the climate was going to warm up. Mike said he preferred to buy locally when possible. Mr. Brundige asked if pines would be considered. Henry said pines were not canopy trees.

Henry suggested the next meeting be at the University Club at the University of Louisville. Henry said the University had unfortunately planted a lot of ash trees on Cardinal Boulevard, making them susceptible to EAB.

Mary Ellen asked that the Commission provide a list of planting site selection criteria that Brightside could use. Katy asked when they needed it. Mary Ellen said before the next meeting. Maria said there would be a meeting in the next few weeks. Mary Ellen said there would be a RFP to plant in October and November. Katy asked if Mary Ellen foresaw giving grants to local organizations such as Louisville Grows! or would it all go through a contractor. Mary Ellen said that was open for discussion and they needed the Commission's advice.

Henry asked Mike to explain the difference in cost between bare root trees versus container trees. Mike said the bare root trees were much cheaper, but could only be planted in the dormant season. But they required more care—they required staking and more watering. Everyone expressed a desire to support local nurseries, and Mary Ellen said there was a buy-local clause, with local being defined—she thought—as the Metropolitan Statistical Area.

VIII. Adjourn

Henry adjourned the meeting at 6:03pm.